

**ALMENA TOWNSHIP**  
**27625 CR 375**  
**PAW PAW, MI 49079**  
**ALMENA TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**December 20, 2023**

- I.** The Almena Township Board meeting was held at the Township Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Clerk Sandra Rickli.

**Roll Call:** Kelly Redmond, John Wagner, Sandra Rickli, Tim Kloosterman, Joe Leduc, and Geoff Moffat.

**Absent:** Bill VanTassel

**MOTION:** **Motion** by Sandra Rickli to appoint Kelly Redmond to chair the meeting in the absence of Supervisor VanTassel, **second** by Geoff Moffat.

**Motion passed 6-0.**

**II. Agenda Changes/Approval:**

The agenda was created at the meeting due to the absence of the supervisor.

1) Under new business, add a groundwater ordinance presentation on KL land, add Market Van Buren, KATS-approval, Dominion voting tabulator approval 2) under reports, add administration committee and deputy supervisor, 3) under unfinished business, add fire committee and NIMS certification.

**MOTION:** **Motion** by Joe Leduc to approve the December 20, 2023 agenda as amended, **second** by Geoff Moffat.

**Motion passed 6-0.**

**III. Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2023 Approval:**

**MOTION:** **Motion** by Joe Leduc to approve the November 15, 2023 meeting minutes as presented, **second** by John Wagner

**Motion passed 6-0.**

**IV. Presentation and Approval of Bills:**

The Clerk presented the monthly disbursements for the period of November 20, 2023 through December 20, 2023. Invoices to be paid in the amount of \$300,489.76 checks written on 12/01/2023 for \$1,682.61, 12/11/2023 for \$2,543.45, payroll paid 11/2/2023 for \$12,791.75, for a total of \$317,507.57

**MOTION:** **Motion** by Sandra Rickli to approve disbursements in the amount of \$317,507.57 **second** by Kelly Redmond.

**Motion passed 6-0.**

**V. Reports:**

**Road Commission:** N/A

**Commissioner:** Dick Godfrey reported on ORV (off road vehicle) Ordinance requests from several townships; recycling 2023 collection event was successful; veterans treatment court graduation will happen December 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Sheriff's Department:** Deputy Tarner reported for November and December 2023. Last month 88 reports in Almena Township, this month 111 calls for service; township is trending upward. Deputy Tarner does advise to slow down on the roads to help prevent accidents in the weather.

**Mattawan Fire Chief:** Scott Brooks reported 95 calls in November, 27 were in Almena Township, the new truck has returned with tools, hopefully a house will be available for active fire training soon.

**Paw Paw Fire Chief:** Jim DeGroff reported the department's new truck is being built; in the future Erwin Bunshoten hopes to eventually take over quick response upon the retirement of John Redmond, which has 6 members presently, department is happy with funding being received from Almena Township.

**VI. Limited Public Comment:** Emily Hickmott with Van Buren Conservation District reported on the recycling collection event 2023. Electronic recycling is available at the Paw Paw thrift store for Almena residents year round; funding has been provided to upgrade transfer stations in Van Buren County.

**VII. Reports:**

Clerk: The township has received the HAVA election security grant money back and has been reimbursed the full amount, the citizen land use course is again being offered for 2024 and is open to any board member or advisory board member, the presidential primary election is coming up and permanent ballot selection forms will be sent out soon, the early voting site should be completed by January 11<sup>th</sup>, the clerk is approaching completion of NIMS 100 training, and advises the first budget meeting should be scheduled soon.

Treasurer: 3,152 tax bills were sent out December 1<sup>st</sup>, Trestle Creek petition numbers are available.

Supervisor: In the Supervisor's absence, Kelly Redmond reported that Steve Schultz from Bloomindale communications updated him that fiber splicing should be done by the end of February. When sections are available, they will come online immediately.

Zoning Administrator: N/A

Administrative Committee: Joe Leduc reported for the administrative committee (members Joe Leduc, Tim Kloosterman, and John Wagner) that the committee has met three times. They have also met with all elected members and township employees and have made recommendations to the officers and staff.

Planning Commission: John Wagner reported that the Environmental Protection Overlay District (EPOD) has been sent to the county for approval, the zoning ordinance text amendment to allow dog kennels in AGLD was recommended for approval, and has been sent to the county planning commission, and the special land use for a tree service contractors office with outdoor storage has been postponed.

Deputy Supervisor: Garrett Reitenour reported he has had a slow start. He and the Supervisor drove by a few dangerous buildings and vacant blighted properties; he also attended a board of review meeting.

**VIII. New Business**

1. West KLA Group: Dan DeWitt, the environmental attorney representing the west KLA group, composed of Kalamazoo County, City of Kalamazoo, Oshtemo Township, and the Upjohn Company reported to the board that the KLA Group is addressing historic groundwater impacts associated with the KL Ave. landfill on West KL Ave. in Oshtemo Township/Kalamazoo County. In March of 2016, Kalamazoo County established a "Groundwater Restricted Zone" or "GRZ" pursuant to Kalamazoo County's Sanitary Code. The GRZ covers over 300 properties down the gradient of the landfill in Kalamazoo County – due to the change in Michigan's drinking water criterion for 1.4-DD, they are currently working with Kalamazoo County to amend the GRZ. A proposed Ordinance for Van Buren (and Cass) Counties is the next step to amend District Public Health Department Environmental Health code to add a new section, 9-16 (Groundwater Use Restricted Zones) The proposed ordinance has been approved by US EPA and EGLB. The Health Dept. is supportive and ready to move to public hearing – which has now been delayed to Feb/March; noticing to affected property owners by mail and publishing will be conducted.

2. Market Van Buren: Market Van Buren is asking for \$4,400 for annual payment, budgeted amount is \$3,000. Representative is not available for questions regarding increase in annual contribution.

**MOTION:** Motion by John Wagner to table this until January meeting when Market Van Buren can attend to explain increase, second by Geoff Moffat.

**Motion passed 6-0.**

3. KATS approval: In kind contribution recommended for \$150 from KATS. After board member discussion, \$30 will be donated from Almena Township.

**MOTION:** Motion by Joe Leduc to approve a \$30 contribution to KATS, second by Kelly Redmond.

**Motion passed 6-0.**

4. Dominion Voting Machine approval: Independent tabulators per precinct to process absentee votes is a more accurate and simple process for the township. Almena Township has rented an absentee vote counting

tabulator in the past, and would instead like to purchase an additional tabulator. The cost is \$7,493 and only \$5,300 has been budgeted – It was suggested that the reimbursement for the security camera could cover the difference.

**MOTION: Motion** by Sandra Rickli to approve the estimate of \$7,493 to purchase a second absentee voter counting board tabulator, **second** by Joe Leduc.

**Motion passed 5-1.**

**IX. Unfinished Business:**

1. **Fire Committee:** Kelly Redmond reported that the fire committee met on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The committee will recommend rejoining the Paw Paw Fire Board and having one committee member join, which would allow a vote from Almena Township when monetary decisions are made by that board. After conversations by phone with the Paw Paw and Gobles Fire Departments, the committee will recommend keeping the current 1.4 mils. Mattawan Fire Chief Brooks would like to set a meeting with the committee before the recommendation is made. This recommendation will be tabled until next month after a meeting with the Mattawan Fire Chief and the fire committee.

2. **NIMS Certification:** The Clerk has almost completed level 100; Treasurer and Supervisor have not begun the certification.

**X. Open Public Comment:** Dave Diget 32180 25<sup>th</sup> St. Questions on the plume effecting Almena Residents from the old KL landfill.

**XI. Adjournment:**

**MOTION: Motion** by John Wagner to adjourn, **second** by Geoff Moffat. **Motion passed 6-0.**  
Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

**Meeting Minutes Approval Date:** Approved 1-17-2024

Cc:        *PC (7)*  
             *Twp. Board (7)*  
             *ZBA (5)*  
             *Zoning Administrator*